
In Memory
OF
John Jordan, Jr.



John Jordan Esq.
Vice Pres.
The Historical Society of Penn^a.
1878.

IN MEMORY
OF
JOHN JORDAN, JR.

ADDRESSES AND PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA,
1)

ON THE DEATH OF

JOHN JORDAN, JR.,

A VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SOCIETY,

HELD APRIL 28, 1890.



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ADDRESSES AND PROCEEDINGS.

A SPECIAL MEETING of the Society was held in the Hall on Monday evening, April 28, 1890, in memory of the late John Jordan, Jr., the President, Brinton Coxe, Esq., in the chair. A large and sympathetic audience was in attendance. The President, in calling the meeting to order, said,—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

We have met to-night to say that which is uppermost in our hearts.

Mr. Jordan was the guardian and father of this Society, and, as such, I was one of those nearest to him. When he and I sat in our respective places, on opposite sides of the table in the North room, our relations seemed more like those of a father and son conferring upon the management of a family than those of two officials administering a public institution.

I have always thought that I fully appreciated the fact that he was the guardian and father of the Society, but now that he is gone and I meditate upon his life and our loss, my sorrow and anxiety convince me that I appreciate him more deeply than I ever did before.

He died without pain and in the fulness of years, surrounded by the love of all who knew him. After he had

set his house in order, after he had seen that his and our society was in order, he passed away in perfect peace.

Mr. Jordan lived to a great age, and nearly half of his long life was passed in daily care, and much of it in daily work, for our society. When we came to the hall and found him neither standing in the South rooms nor sitting in the North room, it seemed as if the host was absent from the house. He was always the chief personage within it. He would, indeed, always have been the chief person here, even if he had not lived so much among us. The officials, the councillors, and the trustees have for forty years, with but few exceptions, been elected or appointed according to his choice or preference. I am at my post because he selected me. All my colleagues are at their posts because it was his selection or wish that they should be there.

The membership of our Society is remarkably representative of our community, and it is so largely on account of him. A sympathetic writer has well said that he was a representative Pennsylvanian of the best type. It was as such that he acted on behalf of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, and so drew so many other representative persons within its fold. Besides, too, his private, his social, his family, and his ecclesiastical relations extended widely throughout the Commonwealth. In many places in it besides Philadelphia tears have been shed for him. He was at home throughout a large area of Pennsylvania. At Bethlehem and at Nazareth there are houses of mourning, as well as at Philadelphia. In English and in German both he is mourned. As was natural, with a man of his prudence, and inevitable with a man who was such a personification of trustworthiness, he had many friends who looked up to him for counsel and guidance. His personal influ-

ence thus, unconsciously as well as intentionally, affected the membership. His friends became naturally friends, and so members, of a Society whose membership was largely based upon public confidence in him.

Not only as to persons, but also as to material things, was he the most important member of our institution. The mere aggregate of his gifts to it, during half of his long life, places him among its most munificent donors, but that aggregate by no means represents the importance of his generosity. Much of what he gave was given in the time of its greatest need; when the Society was struggling for existence; when, as Townsend Ward tersely put it, John Jordan, Jr., was not only the treasurer but the treasury of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. In this, as in every other point of view, he was the friend in need. Furthermore, it was he who was in large measure the cause of our other benefactors selecting the Society for their benefactions. Thus, without the confidence with which he inspired Mr. Gilpin and his family, the Gilpin Fund might never have existed. Without a faith in the durability of his accomplished work on the part of the community, the great subscription, which gave us a home of our own, might never have been secured.

Mr. Jordan's devotion to our institution was an enlightened one. It was based upon conviction as well as feeling. It came from heart and head both. He loved the Society dearly, very dearly, through long, long years, but it was as a means to an end. In practical life it was the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, but in principle it was the *history* of Pennsylvania, which was the object of his devotion. The history of Pennsylvania is a great and a profound subject, but the history of no State equals it in difficulty, from and including the Indian times. In no State, therefore, is

it so necessary for an historical society to be well organized on solid and broad foundations and to have a strong membership for investigations of every sort. A variety of investigators with independent points of view is peculiarly needed by our difficult history. We need members of all ages, old and young. *The necessity of the Historical Society being what the history of Pennsylvania demanded that it should be, was the key of Mr. Jordan's devotion to it.* This Society was especially the place where the civil side of his devotion to public duty was manifested. Bethlehem and Nazareth were especially the places where another side of that devotion was manifested. And now the end has come. He has passed away in perfect peace. His works live after him. The noblest of them is the one which our present members will ever recall, when young members shall ask them in time to come what his portrait means: it is the noble and modest example which his life has given us in private and public duty.

The President then introduced Dr. James J. Levick, who read the following Memorial Address:

In every household there is one of the family who holds pre-eminence of position there. Men call the house by his name; its very existence seems bound up in his existence; while, to the family itself, he is their comforter in sorrow, their counsellor in doubt, their protector from danger, their helper whenever help is needed. Death comes, and the place which has known him knows him no more. For a time it seems as if the very life of the family had gone out with the life of him who has left it, and when, at last, its daily duties are again taken up by survivors, it is with a painful, ever-recurring sense of a vacant place at the hearth

and a vacant place in the heart which can never again be filled as they have been.

It is in the full sense of just such a loss, fellow-members of the Historical Society, that we meet to-night in tender, loving, filial remembrance of one who, for fifty years a member of this household, for more than thirty years has been so closely identified with its daily life, that, even now, we cannot think of these rooms without seeming to see, quietly moving about in them, the venerable form of him who was indeed pre-eminent in our household, our counsellor in doubt, our helper whenever help was needed.

John Jordan, Jr., the son of John and Elizabeth (Henry) Jordan, was born in Philadelphia, May 18, 1808. His paternal ancestors were Germans, but the name is traced by the family to an earlier ancestor, who, soon after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, left France for Germany, whither many of his fellow-countrymen had already gone.

Soon after his arrival in Philadelphia, in 1738, the elder Jordan removed to Hunterdon County, N. J., where he resided during the remainder of his life. Frederick Jordan, son of the emigrant, was born at Mt. Pleasant, N. J., A.D. 1744, and married Catharine, daughter of Henry Eckel, a native of Hannau, Germany. Frederick Jordan was a well-to-do farmer, owning several mills, who managed his business with shrewdness and fidelity, securing for himself and family a comfortable independence. His son, John Jordan, Sr., was born at the family seat, Mt. Pleasant, September 1, 1770. From an early age the boy showed great aptitude for business, and, after the death of his father, when but fifteen years of age, was sent to the counting-house of Godfrey Haga, a relative by marriage, and a well-

known merchant of Philadelphia, where, in subsequent years, he succeeded him in business.

John Jordan, Sr., married Elizabeth, the daughter of the Hon. William Henry, Judge of the Northampton and Monroe County districts, and who as a Presidential Elector cast his vote for General Washington at his second nomination for the Presidency.

John Jordan, Jr.'s, career in life was so much influenced by his grandfather Henry's care and interest for him that he deserves at least a brief notice in this sketch of his grandson. Judge Henry was the great-grandson of Robert Henry, a Scotchman, who came to America from Coleraine, Ireland, in the year 1722, and settled in Chester County, Pennsylvania. William Henry, the grandson of Robert, was brought up in Lancaster, apprenticed to Matthew Roeser, a gun-maker there.

Upon the breaking out of the Indian War, in 1754, he was appointed Armorer to the troops collected for Braddock's expedition. He again accompanied the troops on the second outbreak of the Indian War. Returning to Lancaster, he entered into the iron and hardware business. He was a man of much natural ability, was an early friend of the artist Benjamin West, a member of the American Philosophical Society, and the inventor of several ingenious pieces of machinery. He signed the non-importation paper of the merchants of Philadelphia, was a member of the Assembly from Lancaster, and of the Continental Congress, and President Judge of the County. He was engaged in the manufacture of rifles for the State of Pennsylvania, and a commissary under Washington.

His son William Henry, grandfather of the subject of this memoir, was also engaged in the manufacture of fire-arms, and in the year 1778 removed to the Moravian settlement,

Christian's Spring, near Nazareth, and later to Nazareth. In 1798 he contracted with the State of Pennsylvania for two thousand, and in 1809 with the United States for ten thousand, muskets. He thereupon erected the Boulton gun-works, near Nazareth, and in 1808 a forge to manufacture refined bar-iron. This settlement of his grandfather at Nazareth with the Moravians, to whose church he belonged, had, as has already been said, much influence on the life of John Jordan, Jr.

It is interesting in this connection to notice the blending of blood which the marriage of John Jordan, Sr., and Elizabeth Henry exhibits,—the French Huguenot, the sturdy German, the firm, decided Scotch-Irish. As a great statesman has said of this blood, "there is none better, none braver, none truer. There is in it an inheritance of courage, of manliness, of imperishable love of liberty, of undying adherence to principle."

John Jordan, Jr., received his earliest literary education at a school on Front Street, near Arch Street, taught by a pedagogue well known in that day, one Peter Widders. After this he began the study of the Latin and Greek languages and mathematics, under the care of Dr. James P. Espy, whose famous treatise on the "Philosophy of Storms" gained for him the title of "the Storm-King." Among his fellow-students were the late Dr. Wm. W. Gerhard and John C. Trautwine, Esq. Espy was a man of great enthusiasm and well fitted to interest and instruct a bright scholar such as he himself describes young Jordan to be. In the year 1826, John Jordan, Jr., entered the University of Pennsylvania. He was a favorite with his classmates, and was early elected a member of the Philomathean, the popular college society of that day. But his health, which had never been robust, by application to his studies became still

more affected, and an impairment of his sight compelled him reluctantly to retire from the University at the close of his Junior year. But the friendships formed during his brief college stay continued during life. Among his classmates were the late Dr. Joseph Carson, while of those who survive him are the Hon. Isaac Hazlehurst, John Ashhurst, Sr., Henry Pratt McKean, and Robert B. Davison. When but a boy of ten or twelve years he had been sent to Nazareth, Pa., to spend the summer months. Here his grandfather Henry lived, and here, though never a resident pupil at Nazareth Hall, he was permitted, with his cousin, James Henry, to attend as a day-scholar. "But what we most enjoyed," writes his now venerable relative, "were the long walks with our dear grandpa in the forest or in fishing in the Bushkill creek." Here the young Philadelphian regained much of the health he had lost in the city. Mr. Jordan always retained a warm affection for the companions and scenes of his youth, and was accustomed in later life to pass a part of each year in Nazareth or its vicinity.

So much better suited to his health had his life in the country proved, that in his early manhood Mr. Jordan was induced to accept a proposal made him by his uncle, and join him in the manufacture of bar-iron, a business for a time carried on by them near Stroudsburg, Monroe County, Pa. A little later they removed to the Oxford furnace, near Belvidere, N. J. While operating this latter the experiment was made by them of applying anthracite coal to the production of pig metal, but this, along with similar experiments made elsewhere at this date, proved unsuccessful.

The changes in the tariff, which paralyzed the iron trade, induced Mr. Jordan to retire from this business, and he returned to Philadelphia, where he became a partner in the

house founded by his uncle, in 1783, continued by his father and brothers, and which is now successfully carried on by his nephews in the old house, Third and Race Streets, covering a period of continuous business for more than a hundred years.

In the year 1847, March 8, Mr. Jordan was made President of the Manufacturers' and Merchants' bank, of which he had been for some years previously a director. The period of his presidency, from 1847 to 1875, embraced the most critical times in our national history,—the financial panic of 1857, and the uncertainties of business incident to the breaking out of our Civil War, but at no time during his administration of the affairs of the bank were its dividends when due passed by unpaid.¹

It was during this Presidency of Mr. Jordan that the first steps were taken for a concert of action by the officers of the banks which have led to the establishment of what is now known as *The Clearing-House Association of the Banks of Philadelphia*, an organization rendered necessary by the vast increase of the banking business, and which, by enabling the debits and credits of different banks to be exchanged and settled by checks, instead of by the transportation of coin or of circulating notes, effects a vast saving of time and labor, and gives greater security in the transaction.

¹ On the retirement of Mr. Jordan from the Presidency of the bank, May 28, 1875, resolutions were adopted by the Board of Directors expressing their "high appreciation of the care, fidelity, and good judgment with which, for more than thirty-two years, he has discharged his responsible duties. We trust that he may yet enjoy many years of continued health and happiness." A resolution was also adopted, "as a further mark of our esteem and confidence, that a suitable testimonial be prepared, and presented to Mr. Jordan, and that he be requested to sit for a portrait, at his convenience, to be the property of the Bank.

Such an institution had long existed in London, and later in Boston and in New York, but it was not until September, 1853, that the meeting above referred to was called. How far the proposal may have originated with Mr. Jordan, it is impossible to tell, as he was himself the last survivor of those who then met; but the fact that he was chosen secretary of the preliminary meeting, and served as such for many years after the organization was effected, shows that he took an active interest in the movement.¹ The original minute of the first meeting reads thus: "The undersigned, being of the opinion that periodical meetings of the Presidents of the several Banks of the City and County of Philadelphia, for the purpose of conference and interchange of views on such topics as will be considered proper subjects of discussion and action, will tend to promote stability and regularity in the business of banking, do hereby agree to meet on Wednesday, 28th current, at the Philadelphia Bank, at one o'clock, and thenceforward at such time and place as may be decided upon."

Signed by fifteen Bank Presidents.

"John Jordan, Jr., Secretary."²

¹ Mr. Jordan acted as secretary until January, 1867, when his resignation was tendered and accepted. He resigned from the Clearing-House Committee in 1869, and was succeeded by our fellow-member, James V. Watson, Esq., President of the Consolidation National Bank.

² The names signed are Thomas Allibone, President of Bank of Pennsylvania; Thomas Robins, President of Bank of Philadelphia; John Richardson, President of Bank of North America; Singleton A. Mercer, President of Farmers' and Mechanics' Bank; Jacob M. Thomas, President of Commercial Bank; James B. Mitchell, President of Mechanics' Bank; Robert L. Pittfield, President of Bank of Northern Liberties; Joseph Wainwright, President of Kensington Bank; Joseph Patterson, President of Western Bank; John Jordan, Jr., President of Manufacturers' and Mechanics' Bank; Adolph E. Borie, President of Bank of

The association of Bank Presidents continued their meetings to the common advantage of the banks there represented. At the meeting held December 14, 1857, the subject of a Clearing-House was brought forward, and it was resolved, "That this subject be referred to a committee of five members of this body, with instructions to prepare a plan and code of rules to govern the institution and to report to the Board."

At the following meeting this report was produced and adopted. The Clearing-House Association permits as its members the presidents of the banks, vice-president, or cashier, or such other person as the board of directors shall appoint, while the older association was made up exclusively of the bank presidents. The two organizations continued each to hold its meetings theoretically independent of each other, but as the two were largely composed of the same men having similar interests, on April 7, 1882, they were merged into one association, under the title of the Clearing-House Association of the Bank Presidents of Philadelphia. This association very soon appointed the Clearing-House Committee, on whom most of the active work depends.

The first committee consisted of Messrs. C. H. Rogers, Edwin M. Lewis, John Jordan, Jr. (Secretary), James M. Dickson, and our esteemed fellow-citizen and fellow-member, Benjamin B. Comegys, who is now the only survivor of the five.

How large are the interests involved in the transactions of the Clearing-House may be judged from the fact that it is quite common for exchanges to be made to the amount of \$1,000,000.00. Charles S. Boker, President of Girard Bank; Charles H. Rogers, President of Tradesmen's Bank; James S. Smith, Jr., President of Southwark Bank; Elijah Dallett, President of Penn Township Bank.

of from twelve to fourteen millions of dollars daily, while the great security which this mode of conducting business affords, is shown in the fact that from the organization of the Philadelphia Clearing-House nearly sixty-four thousand millions of dollars have passed through it without any loss.

Another organization in the establishment of which John Jordan, Jr., took an active part, was what is now known as *The North Pennsylvania Railroad Company*. The need for direct, speedy communication between Philadelphia and the Upper Delaware and Lehigh Rivers had long been recognized. The rich products of the field, the forest, and the mine naturally belonged to the chief city of the State in which they were found. To the tourist and man of leisure the marvellous beauty of this region was well known, but much of it could be enjoyed only after long and tedious driving in a private carriage, or in the slow and antiquated stage-coach. To facilitate transportation of merchandise a line of continuous canals was constructed, useful to some degree, but very far from fully meeting the actual need. Meanwhile, the city of New York, ever alive to its own interests and prompt to secure them, sought to divert to her own uses the trade of this region. A great loss to Philadelphia seemed imminent, when a town meeting was called in Sansom Street Hall, and an address was read calling attention to these facts, and urging the necessity for prompt aid in the construction of a railroad from Philadelphia to the Lehigh, "there to connect with a road about to be commenced from Easton to Mauch Chunk, to Williamsport, Wilkesbarre, and along the Valley of the North Branch, thus placing the whole Lehigh Valley in direct communication with Philadelphia."

In this proposed road Mr. Jordan took an active interest

from its inception. He knew the region well. It was associated with many of the happiest days of his youth, and of his maturer years. Before this address was issued he was at the first meeting of the incorporated Philadelphia, Easton and Water-Gap Railroad, as the proposed road was known in its charter, in which his name appears as one of the incorporators. This meeting was held at the Eagle Hotel, Third above Race Streets, August 17, 1852.

On almost every page the early minutes show the active interest of Mr. Jordan. "On motion of Mr. Jordan, Thos. S. Fernon was appointed secretary of the board." Again, "On motion of Mr. Jordan, William B. Foster was elected chief engineer." "On motion of Mr. Jordan, the salary of the chief engineer was fixed at" such and such a rate. "On motion of Mr. Jordan, the thanks of the board are presented to James M. Porter, Esq., and John M. Read, Esq., for addresses delivered in the interests of this corporation."

Mr. Jordan was appointed on the committee to draft the first by-laws; he was early made a member of the Committee on the Road. On February 7, 1853, he was placed on the Committee of Finance, a position in which he faithfully served up to the time of his death, a period of nearly forty years. Time would fail me to give further historical details on the subject of the road or of his connection with it, nor is it necessary; enough has already been adduced to show the commanding influence, if such a term may be applied to one who was rarely known "to command," which his probity and his integrity of character gave Mr. Jordan in whatever business associations he was placed. Some years later, October 3, 1853, on motion of John Jordan, Jr., the road took the name of the North Pennsylvania Railroad, by which it is now so widely known. Its history has been a varied one, sometimes with a financial outlook

of a most discouraging character; but in all the chances and changes of its existence, Mr. Jordan was ever its earnest, zealous friend, attending, unless prevented by illness, all its meetings, ready with his counsel when it was needed, and prompt to aid it from his own means when it was financially embarrassed, never doubting its ultimate prosperity, a conviction which, happily, he lived to see fully confirmed.

I have thus far spoken of John Jordan, Jr., in his active business life. I come now to speak of the details of another period of his life which appeal very strongly to the love and gratitude of the members of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Jordan was elected a member of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, September 23, 1840, and, with the exception of the Presidency, which he positively declined to accept, as Vice-President, member of the Executive Council, Corresponding Secretary, Recording Secretary, Trustee of the Publication Fund, of the Library Fund, of the Gilpin Fund, the Endowment Fund, he has filled almost every official position in the Society.¹

Mr. Jordan's active interest in the Historical Society dates from a very short time after his election in 1840, and in less than two years he was chosen a member of its Council.

Almost immediately after this his name appears on the list of those presenting books to the Society. The care and judgment shown in the selection of these gifts and the regularity with which they were made prove that his heart was

¹ From the close of this paragraph to that including the letter from Mr. Jordan I am indebted to Frederick D. Stone, Esq., whose personal friendship and close association with Mr. Jordan so well qualify him to write of the latter's devotion to the Historical Society, and of much that is interesting in his private life.—J. J. L.

entirely in the work, and that his efforts to improve the condition of the Society were directed by an intelligent knowledge of what it needed, born of an active participation in its management. This generosity extended to every department of the Society, but so modest was he that he has allowed but a partial record of it to appear on our minutes. Indeed, so little did he allow the left hand to know what the right hand did, that it seems almost like a violation of confidence now to state the little that can be gathered from those who knew in a general way what he was doing from their associations with him. For quite a number of years his expenditures for the Society amount to at least a thousand dollars annually; and some time during the war, between 1861-1865, it was learned accidentally from him that he had spent for the Society, from one time to another, over thirty thousand dollars.

He never lost an opportunity to benefit the Society, when in his opinion an important object could be accomplished either by gifts or timely aid. Nothing better illustrates this than the establishment of our Publication Fund. The idea of forming such a fund was conceived and carried out by the late Townsend Ward, who in doing it received substantial assistance from Mr. Jordan, which he never hesitated to acknowledge. When asked how it was possible that the Fund could publish and pay for a volume which cost more than double the income received from all sources, without spending any of the capital, Mr. Ward replied that there was no difficulty about it, as Mr. Jordan paid all the bills, and would wait until it was convenient for the Trustees to repay him out of the interest to be received. The fund thus formed and so carefully nursed by Mr. Jordan amounts now to more than thirty thousand dollars.

Besides the numerous donations of books made by Mr.

Jordan, he subscribed liberally to the First and Second Building Funds, to the Library and Endowment Funds, to the Penn Papers, and to pretty much everything the Society ever undertook to purchase.

By his suggestion, and largely at his expense, copies were made of the records of the monthly meetings of Friends in different parts of Pennsylvania, thus preserving the details of the inner life of many of the early settlers of Pennsylvania unattainable in any other way. The interest he took in the purchase of the building we now occupy is remembered by all then active in the management of the Society. Never for a moment after the matter was undertaken did he allow a doubt to enter his mind of its accomplishment. He used his influence to the full extent to obtain subscriptions, and nearly every subscription received by mail he acknowledged by letter and in suitable terms. Well remembered, too, is the satisfaction he manifested when the committee, after having raised by personal solicitation about one-half the sum required, issued an appeal to all the members, telling them what had been done and calling upon them for aid, and received enough in a few days to complete the purchase and to secure an additional lot, upon a part of which the hall we now are in stands.

At last the Society he so dearly loved, and to which he had devoted so much time and money, was to have a home of its own, where it would be safe for all future time. While he was too modest to acknowledge it, or even to permit such a thought to enter his mind, his friends knew that this had been accomplished largely through the confidence in the Society which he had inspired in the community. This was shown not only in the promptness with which some of the largest subscriptions were made, but in the fact that three hundred and twenty-three subscriptions

were received in sums varying from one dollar to one hundred dollars. It showed, as Mr. Wallace then said, that "when the name of John Jordan, Jr., was affixed to a paper it inspired confidence wherever it went."

Mr Jordan never had robust health. Indeed, he has said that he never knew what it was to be healthy until he had reached middle life, a period which, as a young man, he never expected to attain. He was very near-sighted, which later in life gave an appearance of increased infirmity, and for years he rarely walked out at night alone. On account of his delicate health he was obliged to take gentle and regular exercise, and for many years rode on horseback almost daily. One of his favorite rides, and which left the most pleasing recollections, was over the old river road along the banks of the Schuylkill.

For years, whenever he visited Bethlehem or Nazareth, he did so in a private conveyance, and continued this practice until the decadence of the inns along the route and advancing years deprived him of the keen enjoyment derived from such trips. Sometimes his excursions were of a wider range and partook of the character of historical pilgrimages. In 1855, one hundred years after Braddock's defeat, Mr. and Mrs. Jordan, Paul Weber, Edward Armstrong, and Townsend Ward took the cars for Pittsburg, and passed several days in visiting Braddock's Field and other points of interest in the vicinity. On another occasion, with a congenial party of friends, he visited the sites of the Moravian Missionary Settlements in New York and Connecticut, and was present at the dedication of monuments erected at these places by the Moravian Historical Society, of which he was an active member. In 1870, with a number of members of the same society, he visited the site of Freidenshütten, near Wyalusing, Penna., where a

memorial stone, which he had prepared, was placed with appropriate ceremonies.

Mr. Jordan's acquaintance with the material relating to the history of Pennsylvania was as great or greater than that of any of our other members. He superintended the classification of the Society's manuscripts, which are now bound, and personally did all but the purely mechanical work on many of the volumes. In this way he obtained a knowledge of much that related to the unprinted history of the State.

Besides this, he was a great reader, and until a very few years midnight found him with his books. He was conversant with nearly every printed authority of an historical or biographical nature relating to Pennsylvania, and only a few years ago read systematically the twenty-eight volumes containing the Archives and Colonial Records of the State. He was also familiar with the manuscript and printed collections of the Moravian Church, and his excellent memory enabled him to turn at once to any important fact that he met with in his studies. His memory, indeed, was so good that unfortunately he never felt the importance of making notes or of reducing the result of his investigations to writing, and it is doubtful if a single page remains to testify to the acumen of his learning. Besides his taste for historical, Mr. Jordan was very fond of general, literature, and, in fiction, Scott, Cooper, Dickens, and Thackeray were his favorite authors. Although he never acquired the habit of speaking either French or German, he read both languages with ease, and some portion of each day was devoted to them.

Mr. Jordan had a keen sense of humor, and was quick to discern the comic side of human nature. Nothing was more agreeable to him than to meet his friends at social gather-

ings where, in company with a few of those who knew him best, all restraint could be laid aside, and reminiscences and anecdotes furnished the topic of conversation. This lighter vein of character was not confined to his personal relations with others, but influenced his taste in reading. A truly humorous book afforded him great amusement, and in the Anniversary edition of the *Pickwick Papers*, illustrated with views of places made memorable by the associations which the genius of Dickens has woven around them, he found an especial satisfaction. While no one engaged in collecting material for an historical work ever failed to enlist his sympathies, or to receive from him such assistance as he could afford, there have no doubt been some whose enthusiasm was at times dampened by Mr. Jordan's love of accuracy, as he invariably advised beginners that accuracy in collecting and stating facts was absolutely necessary, and that without this such papers were better left unprinted.

This love of accuracy made him very impatient at times at the way in which history is treated in many of the newspapers. There was perhaps but one other thing which more disturbed the equanimity of our friend than this, which was that, after having generously and at some trouble assisted in genealogical investigations, to find that the only motive of the inquirer was that he might recover an immense fortune in the possession of some banking institution of Europe, the directors of which were extremely anxious to pay it over to the proper persons.

Nothing can better conclude a record of Mr. Jordan's many services to the Society than the letter he sent to the Council communicating to his fellow-members his last and crowning act of generosity.

It is as follows :

PHILADELPHIA, February 23, 1889.

To the Hon. James T. Mitchell, Chairman, and to the members of the Council of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania:

GENTLEMEN,—About 1841 I was one of those who subscribed for the purchase of the first book-case received by the Society. From that time I have watched with interest the growth of the Library, and, notwithstanding the spacious quarters now occupied by the Society, feel convinced that in a very short time it will need additional space for the proper storage of books that are being constantly added to its collections. I long ago resolved that whatever I could do to promote the interests of the Society I would endeavor to do during my lifetime, and I now wish to provide for the contingency I have spoken of.

After consulting with your librarian regarding the erection of such a building as will be needed, I directed him to have plans prepared which will be submitted to you. They provide for the erection of a fire-proof building on the 13th Street front of the lot in the rear of the Hall. It is to be so constructed that the entire building can eventually be used for the storage of books, but for the present the second floor can be used for the display of objects of interest belonging to the Society, as I believe such objects in safe quarters will attract other collections.

The plans are subject to your approval, and any alterations you may suggest that do not involve additional cost will be considered.

When everything is decided upon I propose to deposit with the Treasurer of the Society and the Trustees of the Library Fund the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000), the estimated cost of the building to be used for its erection.

If in the future the present property occupied by the Society should be sold and the money received for it should be more than is required for the purchase or erection of a new building, I would like the sum I now propose to give to

be deducted from it and given to the Trustees of the Library Fund, to be invested by them and the interest only used for the objects of the Trust, but I do not make this any condition of the gift.

Respectfully,

JOHN JORDAN, JR.

This generous offer was promptly and gratefully accepted by the President and Council, and preparations were at once made for the construction of the fire-proof annex with which you are now familiar. The dimensions of this structure between the walls are forty-two by twenty-three feet. It conforms with the architecture of the main building and is thoroughly fire-proof. It is two stories high. The upper, twenty-one and one-half feet high, is devoted to the exhibition of manuscripts and rare works and pictures. The first floor is divided by an open iron floor, making two stories, each seven and one-half feet high. On these two floors between thirty and forty thousand volumes can be stored in shelves. When more room for books may be required, the upper story can be divided into three floors similar to the lower floor. The total capacity of the stack will be between seventy-five and one hundred thousand volumes. No change is proposed to be made on the upper floor before another fire-proof building is prepared for the choice and rare collections of MSS. and books. It may, perhaps, be properly stated here, that when Mr. Jordan joined the Society its library numbered fifty volumes; to-day it numbers thirty-five thousand.

At a stated meeting held May 6, 1889, the President announced to the society this gift of Mr. Jordan. Appropriate remarks were made, but an intimation had been received by those taking active part in the proceedings that it would be most grateful to Mr. Jordan if **but** little

reference of a personal character were made to the donor. With his characteristic modesty, Mr. Jordan was not present at the meeting.

The building itself is a fitting type of the character of him who gave it: plain and unpretending, yet solid and enduring. The superb and unique collection of Colonial Laws, the gift of Mrs. Charlemagne Tower, followed, as it has been, by another most valuable collection of a different character and from a different source, to which I may now only thus allude, already show the correctness of the conviction expressed by Mr. Jordan, that the security thus afforded would attract to the Society more objects of interest and value. Thus the influence of Mr. Jordan continues to be exerted for the good of our Society, though he himself is no longer with us. Had Mr. Jordan given nothing else to the Society than this building, it were fitting that his name be held in perpetual remembrance. But this is by no means the greatest service he has rendered it. Rather is this to be found in the unwearied devotion to its interests for half a century, in his liberality, "constant, though concealed," in his judicious counsels, in his fearless courage, which inspired confidence in the community and hope for the Society among its members, a confidence crowned with success. There is not a shelf in these cases which has not on it one or more books placed there directly or indirectly by him; there is scarcely a manuscript which he has not examined; on every side is seen the work of his hand; never were the words more appropriate,—

"Si monumentum requiris, circumspecte."

Imperfect as any sketch of our honored Vice-President must be, it would be yet more incomplete were no mention made of his religious faith and life.

By inheritance and family connection Mr. Jordan was a Moravian, a church for which he retained a warm affection all his life long. This was shown by his intimate friendship with its most earnest members, by his generous contributions to its various needs, and by his deep interest in its history.¹

¹ Among these last may be briefly named,—through his exertions largely, the Moravian Historical Society was founded in 1857 and its Publication Fund established, which has issued two volumes of over five hundred pages each, and the third volume now preparing of the History of the Moravians in Pennsylvania. He took a deep interest in the history of Moravians in Pennsylvania, and can be credited directly or indirectly with the publication of the following works:

1. "Life of John Heckewelder." By Rev. Edward Rendthaler, 1847.
2. "A History of Nazareth Hall, 1755-1855." By Rev. Levin T. Reichel, 1855. A second and enlarged edition by Rev. W. C. Reichel, 1869.
3. "Sketches of Moravian Life and Character." By James Henry, 1859.
4. "Memorial of the Dedication of Monuments erected by the Moravian Historical Society to mark the Sites of Ancient Missionary Stations in New York and Connecticut," 1860.
5. "Memorials of the Moravian Church." By Rev. W. C. Reichel, 1870, and a number of monographs.

To mark the sites of Indian (Moravian) mission stations he had memorial stones erected at the following places:

Shecomeco and Wechquadnach, in New York and Connecticut, 1860, the sites of the *first labors* of the Moravians among the Indians. At Wyalusing (Bradford County, Pa.), in 1871 (an Indian Mission between 1765-1772), and he largely aided in the erection of the monument over the grave of David Zeisberger, in Ohio, who for upward of forty years was a missionary among the Indians.

In 1870 he purchased the "Whitefield House" and lot, at Nazareth, Pa. By deed of trust he conveyed it to "the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" of the Moravian Church, for the use of missionaries who were resting from service, reserving the second floor for the use of the Moravian Historical Society. This house was being erected by George

It fell to Mr. Jordan's lot in early manhood to be brought into close association with members of the Religious Society of Friends, whose purity of life, quiet, gentle manners, and integrity of character won his love for their faith, as it did his heart for one of their number, who for more than half a century since has been his devoted wife. In the year 1833 he was received into membership, was married at the Friends' Meeting-House, Stroudsburg, Monroe County, 4mo. 3, 1834, to Jane, daughter of James and Susan Bell, of Experiment Mills, in the same county; and for the remainder of his life was a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

The line which separated these two religious bodies was not a broad nor impassable one. They were both characterized by plainness in their mode of worship, and by a common faith in a risen Lord. James Logan, writing March 30, 1742, says, "Last fall there came over a German Count of the title of Zensendorf, of a good estate as well as family and education, I suppose between forty and fifty years. He wears his own hair and is in all respects very plain, as making the propagation of the Gospel his whole purpose and business. He and his people are so much for universal charity that without binding themselves to any form they join themselves with all professions that profess to be inwardly guided by the Spirit of Christ, for [they say] if the heart be right, they dispense with all the rest as the exteriors in worship of a more indifferent nature."

Whitefield, for an Orphan House, but was purchased by the Moravians when Whitefield became financially involved.

In 1889 he erected a large annex, costing ten thousand dollars, to the Widows' House at Bethlehem. This house he some years before purchased, endowed, and deeded to the Church, for a home for the widows of clergymen of the Church forever.

This being "guided by the Spirit of Christ," though not exclusively the doctrine of "*The Friends*," was, in the beginning of their history, the one which was prominently put forward by them. William Penn calls it their characteristic doctrine. However flippantly other men might speak of being "moved by the spirit," to them this faith in the Divine presence in the heart was a solemn, actual reality.

"I saw," said Fox, "that Christ died for all men, and had enlightened all men and women with his divine and saving light." But this doctrine, and the results which follow its acceptance, found little favor in the voluptuous court of Charles, as its simplicity had little place in the cold formalities of the Commonwealth. But it was this which Fox and his coadjutors preached, and, as in the days of the early church, everywhere the common people heard them gladly.

Yet neither Fox nor Barclay ever claimed that the doctrine was a new one or peculiar to themselves. They understood the human heart too well not to know that this yearning for a Divine companionship had been the cry of that heart in all ages and among almost all peoples. The savage finds it in the Great Spirit. The Hebrew psalmist recognizes it in the words, "Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" It was το δαιμόνιον—the *Divine One* of the wise Athenian. It was confirmed in the promise of the Holy Comforter; the apostles preached it; the early fathers of the church held and taught it,—“I sought Thee without me,” says Augustin, “and lo! Thou wast within me!” It was this Divine presence which moulded the character of John Tauler and made him fearless amid pestilence and death. It led the Count Zinzendorf to renounce the luxuries of the German Court for the rude wigwam and the ruder life of the Indian. And now, in our time, so steady is the growth of this

belief of the Divine presence in the heart of all men, that a learned and good man, in a recent widely-read essay, proposes to call it "The New Theology," as opposed to "The No Theology" of the present day.¹

In the full acceptance of this doctrine, John Jordan, Jr., was thoroughly a Friend. For the mere externals of religion, whether these be found in the peculiar garb of the Quaker, or in the ritual of the Churchman, he personally cared but little. With that largeness of heart which was characteristic of him, he was ever ready to believe that in obedience to apprehended duty the one might have greater peace of mind in wearing the Friendly dress, while he did not, for a moment, doubt that in the solemn rite of his Church the other might find a most comfortable sacrament. But, for himself, resting in simple faith in the Indwelling Christ, he sought, by His aid, to make his daily life conformable to the Divine pattern, and himself worthy of the Divine companionship. And so as the outcome of this were found in him those graces of character, gentleness, meekness, goodness, which are declared to be the fruit of the Spirit.

There comes to every one whose life is not prematurely cut off a time in that life to which most men look forward with anxiety, some with dread. It is well described in the memorable words addressed to the active, impulsive disciple, Simon Peter,—“When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself and walkedst whither thou wouldst; but *when thou shalt be old* thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.” This loss of individual liberty and strength, this dependence on others which sooner or later must come to every one of

¹ “No Theology and New Theology,” by Rev. Lyman Abbott.—*The Forum*, April, 1890.

us, is a condition which few men can contemplate with complacency. Happy is that man who finds in a son's strong arm or in a daughter's tender care the help which he then so much needs!

Mr. Jordan reached this time of life and recognized it. Eighty years had been passed, and he was now well on his ninth decade. In a letter written August 26, 1889, he writes from Nazareth, "I eat and sleep well, and that is all I can say: reading does not go so well. I am obliged to discontinue writing, and often have my table covered with letters. I cannot walk out, and must depend on my horses, my knees are so stiff."

Coming home in the autumn, he says, "We came home safely on Saturday without ill effects, although I feel weak and cannot expect to be able to attend to anything this week, but will come to the hall very shortly for a time when the weather is favorable. All unfavorable symptoms have passed away, leaving only weakness."

"I am living on borrowed time," were words which now often fell from his lips, but they were not uttered complainingly.

Age, indeed, brought with it an increase of infirmities, but it brought with it also many blessings. Among these were the increased love of friends, the gratitude of individuals, the respect of the community. But choicest among these blessings was the spared life of her who for more than half a century had been the joy of his heart, as she was always the light of his home. With this, too, was the tender care of those who, though not his children, were so nearly allied to him by blood, and so closely bound to him by affection, that they left no place in his heart unfilled, as they left no want uncared for.

Words written at this time by one of his own faith and

of his own years appealed to his heart with especial force and appropriateness.

“What matter that it is not May,
That birds have flown, and trees are bare,
That darker grows the shortened day,
And colder blows the wintry air?”

“Whatever perished with my ships,
I only know the best remains;
A song of praise is on my lips,
For losses which are now my gains.

“And life, no longer chance or fate,
Safe in the gracious Fatherhood,
I fold o’erwearied hands—and wait,
In calm reliance on the good.”

But I must not longer encroach on this hour, and yet I well know how far short of what I should say have been my utterances.

I have indeed been amazed—I do not use too strong a term—at the wealth of material which has flowed to my hands for the performance of the duty assigned me, but which I can only imperfectly make use of to-night.

I mention the name of John Jordan, Jr., to a friend, and he says, “Yes, he was a contributor to our School Fund;” to another, and he replies, “He gave to our Freedmen;” a third says, “He was a subscriber to our Bible Society;” while another writes, “He was a life-member of our Forestry Association; we shall much miss him.” Private letters come, whose confidence I would not unduly betray, in which one writes, “When I was a helpless orphan, Mr. Jordan nobly came forward and took the place of a father to me;” another, “For years I was largely indebted to him

for help in financial matters which few would have given ;” says another, “ I am far from having attained to his standard, but such as I am, I am all the better for his influence, which was always for good.” One of our most prosperous citizens, after using words too sacred to be quoted, even here, adds, “ If I have been in any way successful in my calling, I owe it largely to his friendship and help.”

For some years past Mr. Jordan had suffered from occasional attacks of faintness, increased in frequency by any great exertion, and largely due to a feebly-acting heart. On the first day of January, 1890, he was seized with paralysis affecting the entire right side.¹ From this he regained consciousness, was able to articulate, though but indistinctly, and his mind, though at times somewhat obscured, was less so than generally happens in this condition.

Mr. Jordan’s death was in harmony with his life. Spared the agony of pain, the delirium of fever, and the last fierce struggle of life, which make the bed of death terrible, with him there was the quiet, gradual failure, day by day, of strength, until, on the morning of March 23, calmly as to a night’s repose, he passed into that sleep which, on earth, knows no waking.

Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker on behalf of the Committee appointed by the Council to prepare a suitable minute, read the following resolution :

Resolved, That the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, in the death of John Jordan, Jr., whose membership began September 23, 1840, and ended with his life, March 23, 1890, has met with no ordinary loss. During this long period of

¹ It is an interesting fact, that the last act performed by Mr. Jordan’s right hand, before it was paralyzed, was to write a bank-check, as a gift to the Women’s Guild of the Century Club of Philadelphia.

nearly fifty years he witnessed its early weakness, its many and severe struggles with adverse circumstances, and the final culmination of its present success. Throughout all of its diverse fortunes he gave to it earnest support and generous aid. A due recognition of his labors in its behalf requires the statement that its influential position among the foremost literary institutions of the country is largely to be attributed to his exertions. He contributed his means, as is shown not only by the books upon its shelves and the portraits upon its walls, but also by the buildings in which they are housed; he devoted to it his time, and it received the benefit of his intelligent thought. In the bestowal of all these good gifts he claimed no personal credit, he accepted no especial recognition, and his only reward was the silent satisfaction with which he contemplated the results achieved. That cause is fortunate, indeed, which has such zealous, efficient, and unselfish support. It is eminently fitting, therefore, that the members of this Society should make a permanent note of their admiration for his character and of their grateful remembrance of his services.

The Right Rev. J. Mortimer Levering, a Bishop of the Moravian Church, moved the adoption of the resolution in the following words:

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—I assume a sacred and tender duty in accepting the courteous invitation given me to add a few words to others spoken here to-night.

I come in the name of the Church which I represent, bringing its affectionate tribute to the memory of him who is in our thoughts this hour.

I ask that it be added, as a modest sprig, to the evergreen garland made up to inwreath his name by so many who called him their friend.

What he would not permit us to say while he lived, because he shrank from the praise of man, we may freely

say now, after he has passed away, when we look at the works which he has left among us.

The Moravian Church possesses cherished monuments of his wisely-applied beneficence, which elicit not only the gratitude, but also the admiration of all of us who appreciate the delicate thoughtfulness and the unpretentious goodness on his part to which they bear witness.

He sought out among us places and ways of doing good which were peculiarly his own. By these characteristic tokens of his interest in the institutions and enterprises of the Church, endeared to him by many strong ties, all who knew him are constantly reminded of his strongly-marked individuality.

This appeared in a rare blending of the finest antiquarian instincts with the most practical philanthropy. In some of the most conspicuous mementos of his beneficence which remain to the use of the Moravian Church he gratified the tastes of the historian and antiquarian and accomplished the purposes of the philanthropist in one and the same deed.

The visitor to Nazareth and Bethlehem who cherishes regard for historic remains of the olden time will naturally be interested in such structures as the venerable "Whitefield House" at Nazareth and the "Widows' House" at Bethlehem. When he is told that both have been secured as the perpetual possession of the Church, and placed beyond the reach of danger either from vandalism or neglect, he will appreciate the spirit of the man who thus cared for the preservation of these ancient buildings, so rich in hallowed memories.

When the visitor is further informed that the Whitefield House, erected a century and a half ago by the first Moravian missionaries who penetrated the forests of Pennsylvania, has, by the provisions of him who rescued it from the

dishonor of being used as a common tenement, been converted into a home for retired missionaries, he will admire the well-directed benevolence which turned the historic pile to practical accounts in a way so charmingly in keeping with its early associations.

In like manner, every one who learns that the old building in Bethlehem, referred to before, with its stately annex, built by our venerable friend and finished so shortly before his decease, now serves, in accordance with his purpose, as a home for the widows of Moravian ministers, and is to be sacredly reserved to this noble use, must praise the thoughtful charity which brought this about, even if the preservation of historic remains does not interest him.

Some will doubtless recognize with appreciation both of the motives which combined in the heart of the benefactor, and will be reminded of this blending of motives, when they see it so strikingly indicated by the fact that in the antique building at Nazareth, purchased and fitted up by him as a Missionary Home, the Moravian Historical Society, which he helped to found and nurture, has, in accordance with his special provision, a depository for its valuable collection, as well as its permanent place of meeting.

There are other tokens of his warm regard for the past and the present work of the Moravian Church which deserve grateful acknowledgment, and which might be spoken of at length.

Largely through his generous aid, more than one spot made historic by the labors, sacrifices, and sufferings of Moravian missionaries among the Indians is marked by a memorial which tells many a passer-by who knows nothing of those men and their deeds that the place whereon he stands is holy ground.

His reverence for the resting-places of those heroes of

the Cross, and of their converts from darkness and sin, has rescued more than one abandoned and almost forgotten Moravian burial-ground, lying in out-of-the-way places, from desecration, and provided for the future preservation of these consecrated places.

Many noble volumes in the library of the Theological Seminary of the Church are witnesses of his interest in the education of its ministry, which in days past included so many of his companions and personal friends.

But I will not detain you with any further enumeration of things which he has done, or of things which were in his heart yet to do, and of which he often spoke, but which remain unaccomplished because the time was too near for him to rest from his labors. Only this I feel constrained yet to add.

The individuals are many for whom I might speak, who have been the recipients of his unassuming, quiet benevolence, bestowed in ways most fine and tender, and who in secret bless his memory.

I believe that when he went up higher, He who saw and knew all of these things accorded to him that highest recognition which can be given the best deeds of men.

“Inasmuch as thou hast done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me.”

Charles J. Stillé, LL.D., seconded the motion and said,—

It seems to me peculiarly fitting and proper that the Historical Society should commemorate the life and services of Mr. Jordan. That life, so beautiful in its simplicity and so earnest in its work, so given up to the help of others, so full of kindness and sympathy for those who, in this materialistic age, aspire to be historical scholars, and so filled with a sense of the importance and dignity of historical

studies; it seems to me that if we are true to our vocation we should not fail in an especial manner to honor and reverence such a life.

And this is the place to do honor to his memory. For here is the child of his love, the true child of his adoption. Nothing is more touching or characteristic than the words of affection he uttered as his life was fast waning,—“How are they getting on at the Hall?”

I need not give a summary of Mr. Jordan's work; that has already been done; but I cannot help saying that it ought to be a subject of profound thankfulness to us, as I doubt not it was to him, that he was permitted to see the child that he had fostered with such infinite care and trouble developed into the mature and completed man.

I am unwilling to disparage the work of any one, living or dead, who has had a share in this great work, yet I hazard nothing in saying that they who have done most will be the first to recognize Mr. Jordan as a leader and an exemplar.

Think of what this Historical Society was fifty years ago. Despite all the efforts of its members, at that time it seemed to struggle for existence. Its membership was small, its quarters were obscure, its finances were insufficient, its library was small, it had no prestige in that, or had no hold either on the popular affection or the respect and consideration of similar societies. When Mr. Jordan joined this Society, he did not do it to gratify a passing whim or caprice. It was because that love of historical study which characterized his whole life was strong within him. During a large portion of that active life he was one of the busiest men in this busy town, and yet he found time to spend a portion of every day in historical study. He found by use the deficiencies of our library, and the magnificent collection

we now have had its origin very much in a sense of his own needs. His money never ceased to flow freely to supply those needs, and I take the opportunity, as a student of Pennsylvania history particularly, to express on behalf of all such students my sense of our obligations to Mr. Jordan.

His greatest pleasure seems to have been in witnessing the improvement and increasing usefulness of this Society. He was the strenuous advocate of those measures, aiding them freely by his purse and influence, which culminated in the acquisition of this noble Hall for its use.

We come here to study history, and, if history be "philosophy teaching by examples," such an example as the history of Mr. Jordan's life should not pass unheeded. Here is a man, quiet, unpretending, undemonstrative, and yet he has built up a monument more enduring than brass; a man whose daily business was to make money for other people, yet who gave up his leisure time to the most ennobling pursuits; a man whose growing means were not wasted upon self-indulgent gratification, who has taught us that the truest use of wealth is to aid others in the pursuit of truth; a man whose shrinking modesty shunned public notice and newspaper notoriety, who, when his good deeds could be covered up no longer, turned away and "blushed to find it fame." If this good man's life be a true example to us, let our gratitude and reverence place him where he really belongs,—foremost among our friends and benefactors.

The resolution was thereupon unanimously adopted.

Dr. Stillé offered the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, earnestly desirous of preserving the memory of the services rendered to it by the late John Jordan, Jr., request the

Council to secure for preservation in this Hall a portrait in oil of Mr. Jordan.

Mr. Richardson L. Wright offered a resolution that the proceedings of this meeting be printed, which was adopted.

The President expressed in feeling terms the thanks of the Society to Dr. Levick for the able manner in which he had this evening performed the duty assigned to him.

The meeting then adjourned.

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